

Message Text

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65

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 INR-07 IO-10 JUSE-00 NSAE-00

SNM-02 USIA-06 NSC-05 OES-03 OMB-01 AID-05 L-03 SS-15

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FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 356

DEA WASHDC

AMEMBASSY CARACAS

INFO US CUSTOMS WASHDC

DEA MIAMI

AMCONSUL MEDELLIN

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E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: SNAR CO

SUBJECT: COCAINE SMUGGLING VIA BANANA BOATS

(GFT: OPERATION BANANAS)

REF: STATE 197576, BOGOTA 7793 DEA 12971 AND 12870

SUMMARY: DEA SAIC GONZALEZ AND NARCOTICS COORDINATOR HAVE DISCUSSED PROBLEM OF COCAINE SMUGGLING FROM TURBO PORT WITH ATTORNEY GENERAL AND GOC CUSTOMS. DEA HAS ARRIVED AT WORKABLE PLAN FOR INTERDICTION AT COLOMBIAN END. SAIC AND NARCOR PLAN TRAVEL MEDELLIN THIS WEEK RESUME CONSULTATIONS WITH LOCAL GOVT AND POLICE OFFICIALS WHICH WE Began LATE LAST YEAR AS RESULT SIMILAR RASH OF COCAINE SMUGGLING INCIDENTS.

1. SAIC AND NARCOR HAVE DISCUSSED TURBO COCAINE SMUGGLING WITH GOC ATTORNEY GENERAL, ASSISTANT ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR JUDICIAL POLICE AND CHIEF OF CUSTOMS NARCOTICS UNIT. DEA HAS PROPOSED, AND ATTORNEY GENERAL HAS APPROVED, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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WORKABLE PLAN ATTEMPT INTERDICTION COCAINE BEFORE IT LEAVES

TURBO VIA BANANA BOAT. PLAN INVOLVES CREATION TO TWO TDY FIVE-MAN CUSTOMS UNITS BASED AT MEDELLIN AND TRAVELING TO TURBO FOR SPOT CHECKS ON BANA BOATS JUST PRIOR TO SAILING. UNITS WILL CONTINUE SEARCH UNTIL SHIP CLEARS CHANNEL, RETURNING TO PORT VIA PILOT BOAT. IN ORDER AVOID TIPPLING THEIR HAND TO SMUGGLERS, UNITS WILL BE BASED AT MEDELLIN, ARRIVING AT TURBO ONLY WHEN BANANA BOATS READY TO SAIL FOR US.

2. MISSION WILL SUPPORT SOME COSTS THIS OPERATION THROUGH AVAILABLE 481-482 FUNDS ALLOCATED TO GOC CUSTOMS. TECHNICAL TRAINING FOR FIVE-MAN UNITS WILL BE PROVIDED BY DEA/BDO SPECIAL AGENT WHO HAS EXTENSIVE US CUSTOMS EXPERIENCE. INFORMATION ON SAILINGS WILL BE OBTAINED FROM UNION DE BANANEROS MEDELLIN. OPERATION OUTLINED PARA ONE ABOVE NEEDS FINAL APPROVAL GOC CUSTOMS DIRECTOR GENERAL OCAMPO, WHICH WE EXPECT OBTAIN WITHIN FIVE DAYS.

3. SAIC AND NARCO WILL TRAVEL TO MEDELLIN (CAPITAL OF ANTIOQUIA DEPARTMENT WHERE TURBO LOCATED AUG 22-23 FOR CONSULTATIONS WITH LAW ENFORCEMENT, GOVERNMENT AND UNION BANANEROS OFFICIALS THERE.

4. UNFORTUNATELY, GOVERNOR OF ANTIOQUIA, JAIME R ECHAVARRIA RESIGNED YESTERDAY. DEA BEGAN CONTACTS WITH ECHAVARRIA AND LOCAL F-2 COMMANDER LAST OCT AT GOV BEHEST AND AS RESULT AWARENESS GROWING TURBO COCAINE SMUGGLING PROBLEM. UNTIL NEW GOVERNOR NAMED, DEA WILL FOLLOW ABOVE PLAN, WORKING WITH CUSTOMS AND UNION BANANAROS (SEE DEA BOGOTA MEMO OF OCT 21 1974 FOR BACKGROUND.)
VAKY

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